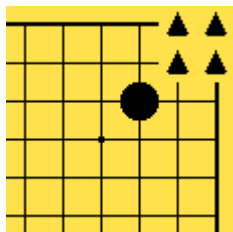


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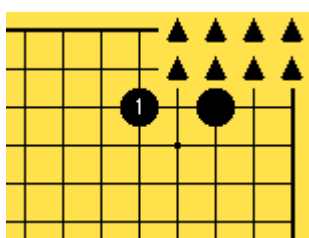
Gentle Joseki, part III by Pieter Mioch

The patterns



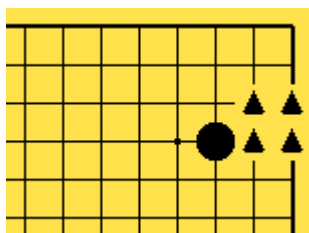
I can't help myself but I just have to show you some diagrams. The deal with a play on the 3-3 point is very simple. You can expect about as much territory as there are triangles, about 4 points (dia 1)

Diagram 1



In dia 2 you can see that by adding another move black gets about 8 points worth of territory. It is not so much but it is pretty solid.

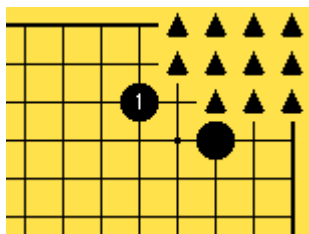
Diagram 2



Dia 3, here black has a played on the 4-3 point (komoku). Although his territory looks bigger as compared to dia 1 I think that in terms of solid territory there is not such a big difference, a play at komoku is worth about 4 points, maybe 5.

Diagram 3

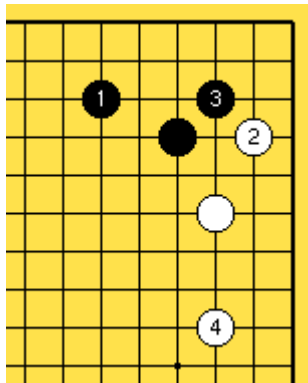
So, are komoku and san-san (3-3) almost equal in value and efficiency? Certainly not, there is a very good reason why komoku was for ages thought of as the best opening move.



If black finds time to spend another move in the corner he'll be able to make as much as 11 points worth of solid territory with the shimari (enclosure) formation in dia 4. This may not sound as such a big deal but 11 points for two moves comes to over 5 points a move, this is as much as you can expect.

Diagram 4

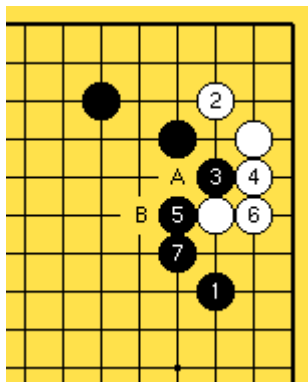
Tenuki or not Tenuki, loose end No. 1



In the previous episode of Gentle Joseki there was, among other things, the following comment by dia 5: "To make a simple situation even more complex, these days black never seems to answer white 2 at 3 right away anymore. Professionals feel that playing the exchange black 3-white 4 sometimes may favor white. Instead of black 3, later on in the game black might want to play a pincer somewhere around white 4 judging from the whole board position."

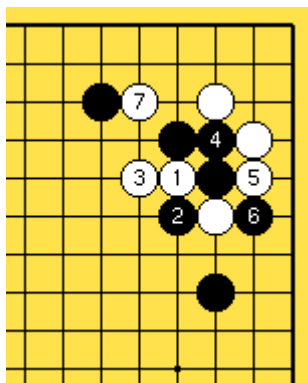
Diagram 5

In order to avoid confusion let's first say that the white slide at 2 most of the time is not a bad move, for more about to white 2 click back to Gentle Joseki II. Which raises the next, excellent, points. Why on earth would black be reluctant to play at 3? Or, what alternatives does black have? Well, there are some moves black might want to consider, but, once again, let's first say that black 3 in the dia is rarely a bad move. It might be a slack play at times to answer white 2 and not take the opportunity to do something somewhere else, but that still does not make it into no-good move on its own.



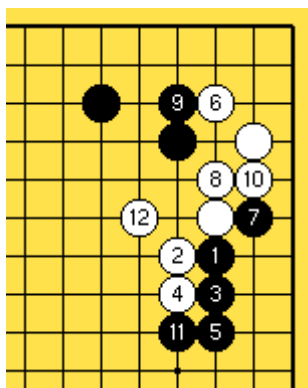
Instead of defending the corner black can think of creating thickness and letting go of the corner territory as in dia 6. The sequence shown here is a peaceful one, however, and black should be prepared to fight back when white plays 4 at A after which all kind of hairy sequences could follow. It should be noted that instead of taking control of the corner with white 2 jumping to B is not good. Black will immediately block of the corner by playing at 2 himself after which it becomes clear that the white stones can not easily make eyes anywhere and they'll have to continue jumping towards the center in order to prevent black from attacking.

Diagram 6



White 1 in dia 6a can lead to very difficult situations. Whatever black does he should not play at 6, after this move he'll find himself tricked by the delicious squeeze play of white 7. Black 2, by the way, can also be played at 4 right away.

Diagram 6a



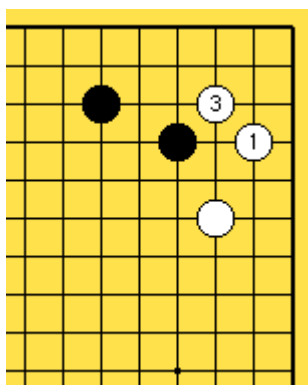
The fashionable clamp at 1 is another alternative for black. This move smacks of a trick play but it is actually a skillful probing move. The sequence shown in dia 7 is uncomplicated and gives an equal result. This joseki is a kind of new and it is not yet clear if white 2 is the best response

Diagram 7

The dias 6 and 7 showed 2 alternative ways of playing instead of guarding the corner as in dia 5. This brings me back to the comment of last time: (dia 5)

"Instead of black 3, later on in the game black might want to play a pincer somewhere around white 4 judging from the whole board position."

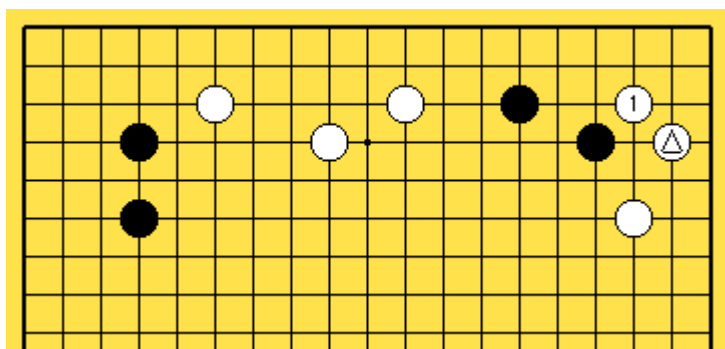
This is all very nice but what prevents the white player from thwarting black's intention of waiting to see what the best play will be and occupying the 3-3 point with his next move himself? Well nothing, actually.



In dia 8 black did not answer white 1 but played elsewhere instead. White plays 3 and effectively takes over the corner territory. When seeing this result for the first time one is tempted to think that this is a clear disaster for black and that nothing can justify taking such a loss in the corner.

A lot, of course, depends on precisely how big a move played when ignoring white 1. To judge dia 8 correctly it is further necessary to know what is at the left side of the board.

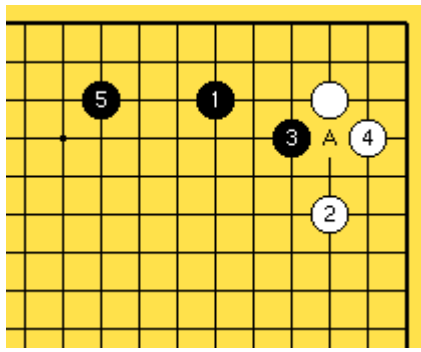
Diagram 8



In dia 9 a situation is shown where it was almost certainly not a good idea to ignore white's marked move. After white takes the key-point in the corner with 1 the black stones have no room to make a two-space extension towards the left and black cannot expect to make two eyes locally. Black's stones are afloat and his stones will most likely keep bothering him until he finally can get two eyes somewhere.

Diagram 9

Looking at dia 8 and 9 you easily can get the feeling that black never should ignore white's slide! (conveniently forgetting about the value of black's tenuki). For professionals there is, however, still another reason why dia 8 is not such a terrible result for black.



Suppose white has played first in the corner at the 3-3 point. Next black has played an approach move at 1 after which white extends to 2. Well, so far so good, but...

Diagram 10

Next the questionable exchange of black 3 for white 4 gets played which gives us the same position as in dia 8.

Professionals and amateurs alike will, of course, never answer black 3 at 4. White 4 should be at A. All the same, there doesn't seem to be such a big difference between the white play at 4 or A. When comparing these moves the

average amateur most probably'll shrug and think "So what, maybe you lost 1 point, no big deal, what's so bad about it for white?"

For pros, however, this is quite different. To be able to make your opponent answer in a submissive way, a way, which does not make efficient use of, previously played stones without compensation, is a very big deal, it's a disaster.

Recently I don't go to observe the professionals play anymore but a couple of years ago when watching the professionals play it often would happen that suddenly in the middle of a game a pro starts beating himself over the head with his fan while screaming out in agony. When you see this happen for the first time you naturally assume that that person must have put his own stones in atari or made a likewise terrible blunder. After the game, however, when following the analyses it is nine times out of ten that the reason for the self-punishment was precisely what I was talking about now, answering submissively and not putting your own stones to optimal use. When a pro realizes that he has played such a move unnecessarily, no matter where or what time of day it is he will feel like walking to a nearby wall and start banging his head against it.

For the white player the 3-4 exchange is terrible. For black it helps justifying letting go of the corner. And, black played on the 4-4 point (hoshi) in the first place, not directly thinking about making territory there, remember? After reading this you now might feel like never taking the corner when playing white as in dia 8. Well, sometimes it might be too early but taking the 3-3 point is a very big move. Also, even though black played on hoshi, black played in the corner first, meaning that IF he lets go of it he should get sufficient compensation. So, if you feel that black's move elsewhere is way too small or doesn't require a direct answer then there's nothing against taking over the corner and being happy.

Game example

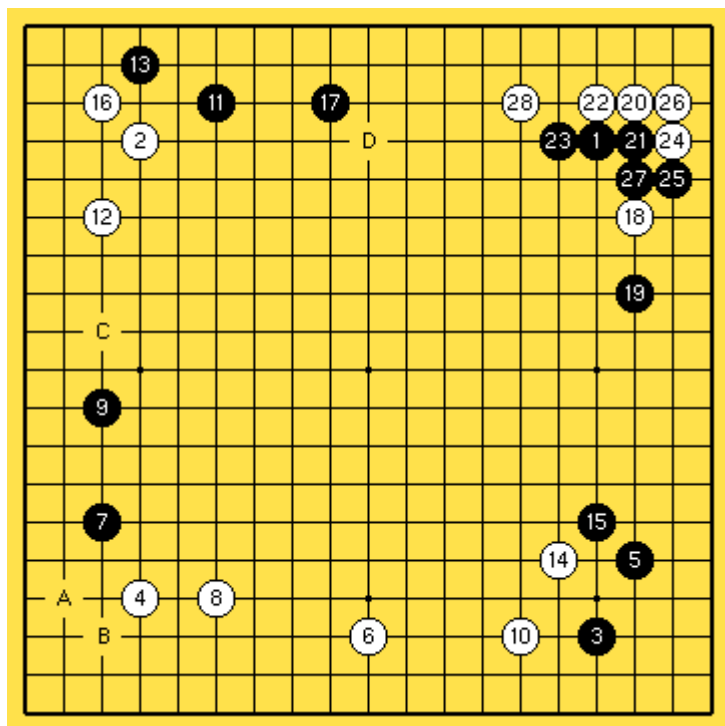
Now what I'd like you to do is to find somebody who's about your own level and show him the opening of this game. Next you ask what your friend thinks about it and you write down the comments and questions he or she might have. Then you ask your friend to read through Gentle Joseki I-III and repeat the same procedure, I promise you to eat my shorts if your friend comes up with exactly the same comments and questions as when going over the game the first time.

19th Female Honinbo title match, game 5, Date: November 22 2000

White: Chinen Kaori, 3 dan

Black: Inori Yoko, 5 dan

By forcing her opponent to resign after move 179 Yoko managed to take the Honinbo title at her first ever title challenge.



There is enough to tell about this particular fuseki but I think that the left side especially deserves your attention. It is very interesting to notice that black is reluctant to play at A. The reason for this is that black in a way helps to solidify white's 4-6-8 formation if she'll make the black A, white B exchange. Black is keen on keeping the option of invading at B alive as a means of reducing the white territory.

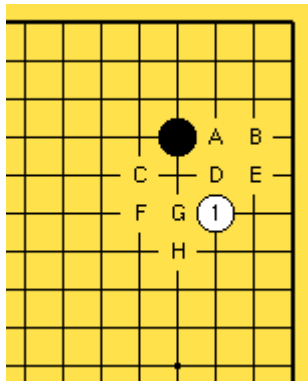
Diagram 11

After black 13 in the upper left corner white choose to play tenuki once. White 14 is an excellent move but does not really force black to answer immediately. Black, however, let go of the chance of playing a second move in the corner at 16. I

think taking the 3-3 point with black was a possible move too but after black 15 at 16 white will extend to C which almost certainly requires black to slide in the corner at A. If the game were to be played like that it is suddenly white who is determining the pace in spite of the disadvantage of not having the first move. This is not to black's liking.

The last thing worth noticing is that black choose to block white 20 at 21, and not at 22. The game move at 21 is the correct direction, black emphasizes the whole right side of the board while maintaining "sente" (the initiative). White will have a tough time keeping black's right side under control, invading here is not what white is looking forward to but if she doesn't do something black's right side is sure to become too much solid territory. If black were to play at 22 instead of 21 then the black moyo would never be as impressive. White has a nice moyo-flattening-move at D. White will not have a hard time keeping black's territory from mushrooming. If black would've had a stone at D to start with, however, she might very well have chosen to play 21 at 22.

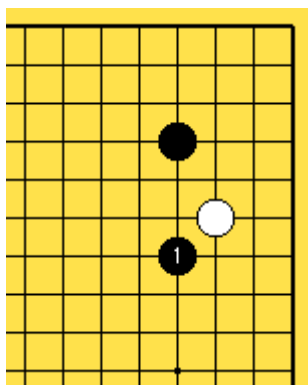
Answering a white approach move with a move which is neither an extension nor a pincer, loose end No. 2



I do not think I have enough energy left to cover all these possible responses (my family and I'll be homeless if we don't find a place to live by December 10) so let me start with the rarest and most intriguing answer, black H.

Reference diagram

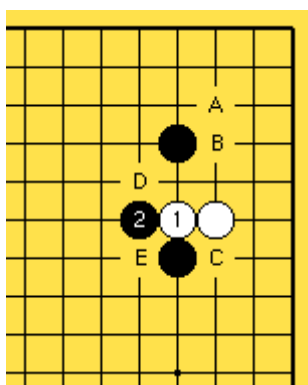
You will never find a beginners book of go telling you about black H, nor will you be able to find a decent go teacher showing you this move and encouraging to try it. It's a kind of a rogue move which, of course makes it all the more attractive. Don't tell anybody you got it from me. (and don't blame me if you played it and it didn't work out at all)



Black 1 seems to be telling white that he is sealed of and that white better hurry to make two eyes at the right side. However, any go player worth his salt has only one thing in mind playing white:

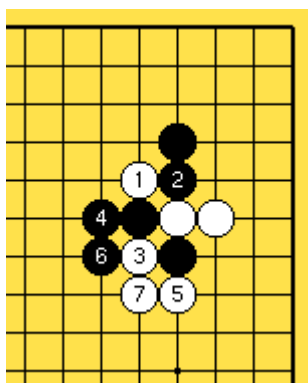
"how am I going to keep these thin black stones separated".

Diagram 12



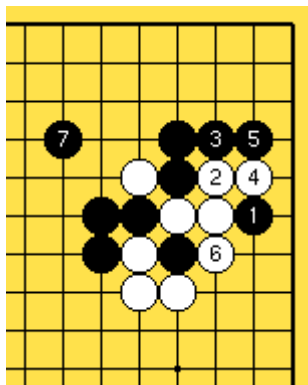
White 1 is a natural move, preventing the black stones to link up and become a thick position. Instead of white 1 there are other moves possible, at times. But if white plays any move from A to C black is not exactly worried. Even if black plays conservatively he'll at least be able to make a thick wall facing the left side and can be satisfied. Next white must choose if he wants to play hane at D or cut directly at E.

Diagram 13



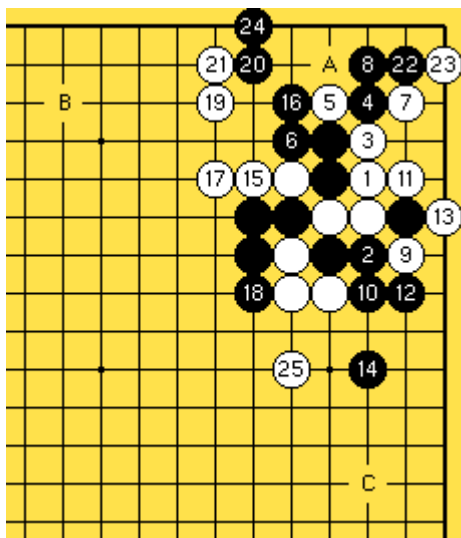
Generally speaking you don't want to cut with the moves 1 and 3. If a sequence will not work any other way it is sometimes inevitable but instead of white 1 here, playing directly at 3 is better style, i.e., to cut at the side you capture. (if white 1 is captured or sacrificed later on the exchange white black 2 is a huge loss for white) The result in dia 14, however, is also something of a joseki, both players get to eat an opponent's stone. There is still a very interesting move left for black, a move that I'm sure you want to memorize.

Diagram 14



Black 1 is one of those moves, which make you forget your worries and make life worthwhile. Dia 15 shows the most peaceful continuation, black seals of the corner and white gets a rock-solid group. White 2 is a move dictated by fighting spirit. Capturing immediately at 6 is much too sweet and black won't hesitate playing at 4 making the corner into solid black property. White 2 in the dia, however, is not without risk as you can see in dia 16.

Diagram 15



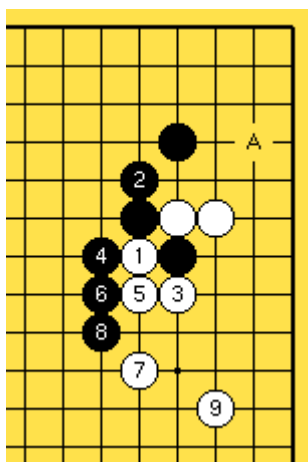
Dia 16. "Do I have to study such a long joseki?" "Is it really necessary to memorize such a long sequence?" "Will I get any stronger by trying to learn from this?"

Good questions, to be sure. The answer is respectively no, no and maybe.

Diagram 16

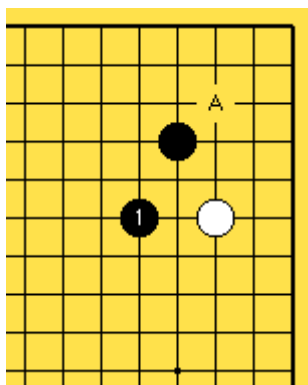
If you like going over long josekies then please do so but otherwise don't worry too much. One point of interest, however, is to realize that white can capture two more black stones if he plays 15 at A. After A black will build thickness, superior in value compared to white's territory. This joseki is a mess, it's real fist fighting and the outcome is not predictable. When white plays 2 in dia 15 he should

be prepared for this. The result on its own is difficult to judge since everything depends on how strong all the floating groups are in the context of the whole board. If, for example, there would be black stones at B or C (or both) white will probably have a very hard time getting a good result.

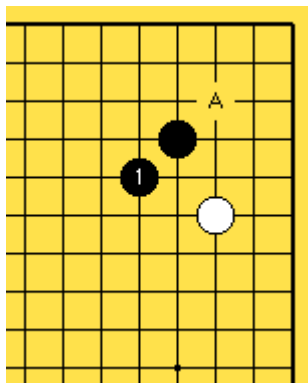


The cut at 1 in dia 17 is a stylish move, refusing to make black unnecessarily stronger (compare 1 in dia 14). Black builds nice thickness up to 8 and white gets 16 points of territory. Whether this is a good result solely depends on the situation on the upper left side. Next black A is extremely big.

Diagram 17

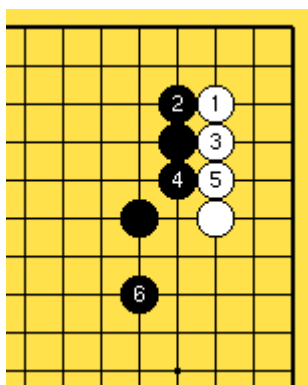


Dias 18 and 19 show moves, which are in a way similar to 1 in dia 12.
Diagram 18



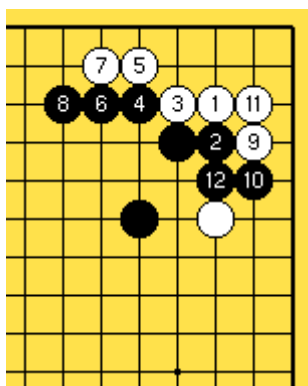
They normally do not involve any fierce fighting but black 1 in dia 12, 18 and 19 all are clearly moves which try to emphasize the left part of the board and do not worry about the obvious defect at A. All these moves, however, are not very convenient in terms of securing territory.

Diagram 19



If white enters at the 3-3 point black can keep things very simple by blocking at 2 and creating a nice wall of steel.

Diagram 20



Being flexible is very very important, black 2 in the previous dia can also be played at 2 in dia 20. The key to real strength is to never automatically choose either but always take a minute to consider both.

Diagram 21

Variations for black 1 in dia 19 are much the same as dia 20 and 21. I will deal with the remaining moves A-G (reference diagram) next time. I hope you'll forgive me going house-hunting.

I do look forward to any feedback you care to mail me, or, you can just wait and keep coming back to Gentle Joseki and I'm sure I'll provide all the answers to your every question someday.

Appendix 01

Index of joseki's mentioned in this episode:

